



**STRATEGY
RESEARCH
PROJECT**

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**MANNING THE RESERVE FORCES:
A TOUGH RETENTION PROBLEM**

BY

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ABSTRACT

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Like the Active Component, the National Guard is also experiencing recruiting and retention problems. In 1999, for the first time, the Air Guard did not make end strength. The ways and means involved in retaining Guardsmen are somewhat different than those effecting the Active Component. Therefore, even if the Active Component is able to identify and solve their recruiting and retention problems, DOD must address the Guard problem from a different perspective. Retaining a Guardsman presents an entirely different challenge than keeping an active duty soldier or airman.

While Guardsmen are dedicated patriots, they are OPSTEMPO/PERSTEMPO "fatigued" to the point that they are voting with their feet. During the past decade DOD has relied more and more on the Reserve Components for carrying out our National Military Strategy. At the same time, commitments have accelerated at an alarming rate. This has put extreme pressure on the Guardsmen and they are feeling the squeeze from both family and civilian employers. Some major reasons for this attrition will be identified and then some possible solutions will be explored.

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MANNING THE RESERVE FORCES: A TOUGH RETENTION PROBLEM

"The bottom line is that we cannot overuse our reservists without seeing a corresponding increase in attrition and a decline in readiness."¹

— Hon. Charles L. Cragin
Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs

The end of the Vietnam War produced many strange and unwelcome consequences. One particularly nasty outcome was that a great number of the American people literally despised the men and women of its own military. A man in uniform was often treated as if he was personally responsible for the tragedy of losing the war. America became a divided nation. Pro-military "hawks" on one side and anti-war "doves" on the other, continually displayed their disgust with one another. Ironically, this disdain was magnified with regard to the members of the National Guard. They seemed to be hated equally by both sides. The hawks disliked them because they were never officially called into action. Membership was looked upon as a draft-dodging ploy. The doves held them in contempt for being a part of the military machine that was, after all, to blame for the war. The memory of four dead students on the Kent State campus most certainly exacerbated that feeling. The result of this was that the long time committed patriots of the National Guard were caught in a "pickle."

The president's decision not to commit the Reserve forces is often postulated to be a significant contributor to America losing the war in Vietnam. "Lyndon Johnson astounded the defense establishment by refusing to call up the Reserves to support expansion of the war in Vietnam, perhaps the most fateful decision of the entire conflict."² As a result, the military leadership masterminded a policy that would prevent America from going to war without the Reserve components. The plan that was agreed upon was simple, yet revolutionary. Essential, front line missions of the United States military war-fighting capability were put into the Reserve components. The intended consequence was that since we cannot fight without them, future members of the National Command Authority would be forced to immediately commit Reserve component forces in the event of a crisis. This, in turn, would provide a litmus test of the national will. Army Chief of Staff, General Creighton Abrams said, "If we're ever going to war again, we're going to take the Reserves with us."³ The theory was that the American people would not support a military action they do not agree with if they are forced to watch their volunteer Reserve component neighbors, friends and family march out with the first wave. While these motives were noble, they mainly applied to a Cold War scenario. The last decade has ushered in a new level of dependence on the Reserve forces. The current utilization of the Reserve forces has accelerated out of proportion to what was foreseen two and a half decades ago. "This isn't a one-time reliance or a short term fix," Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen said in an interview. "We simply could not undertake a sustained operation anywhere in the world without the Guard and Reserves."⁴ Today, the long time committed patriots of the National Guard are once again caught in a "pickle" - of a different sort.

UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

The actual effect of this policy never became evident during the period between Vietnam and the Gulf War. There simply was no major conflict to test it. During the Cold War our Reserve forces were not committed to any great extent. They operated in a manner true to their name – as “reserve” forces. Consequently, despite the fact that they were responsible for essential missions, the members of the Reserves and National Guard were relegated to a role in which they were only to be used in case of the “big war.” “This idea was reinforced in the Gulf War where some 265,000 Guardsmen and Reservists were called upon.”⁵ Since then, however, the term “reserve” has become a misnomer. The National Guard and Reserve forces have been called upon at an unprecedented rate. Today, the Reserves are more “active” than ever. It is debatable whether or not the policy is producing its desired effect - of never committing military forces without an accompanying will of the people. However, the policy has accomplished one thing. It has committed the Reserve component personnel to an operational tempo that is now becoming the cause of some serious unintended consequences. The Reserve component troops are voting with their feet.

NO END IN SIGHT

The men and women of the United States military Reserve components are overextended. They are currently engaged in supporting our National Military Strategy in no less than 39 countries across the globe. “The utilization of the Reserve components is now nearly 13 times greater than a decade ago.”⁶ During this decade, these citizen soldiers have been active participants in humanitarian efforts, peacekeeping operations and in some cases, all out war. In crisis after crisis these patriots have responded in accordance with our current strategic principles of “Shape, Respond and Prepare.”⁷ Unfortunately, this exhausting commitment of United States Reserve component military manpower shows little sign of abating and it seems to be taking its toll, especially in the Air National Guard. “There is no end in sight. A recent Pentagon study predicted the demand for Guard and Reserve deployments “is likely to remain high over the next 15 to 20 years.”⁸ In light of this fact, this paper poses the following question: will the United States Military, specifically the Air National Guard, be able to continue this pace into the 21st century? The conclusion will be that we will not, unless serious attention is paid to retaining the manpower that currently comprises the Reserve component of our military force.

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE

Our strategies are but lifeless words without the forces to achieve them. Paramount among these forces is manpower - the men and women that are called upon to execute these strategies. The finite nature of these precious human resources is clearly spelled out by the President in his National Security Strategy. “Because our shaping efforts alone cannot guarantee the international security environment we seek, the United States must be able to respond at home and abroad to the full spectrum of threats and crises that may arise. Our resources are finite, so we must be selective in our responses, focusing on challenges that most directly affect our interests and engaging where we can make the most difference.”⁹

It would be foolish to proffer a strategy that lacked the prime ingredient of its execution – manpower. The President reiterates the importance of quality people in our “all volunteer” military force structure. “To ensure the quality of our military personnel, we will continue to place the highest priority on initiatives and programs that support recruiting, quality of life, and the training and education of our men and women.”¹⁰

THE AIR GUARD FALLS SHORT

Our entire National Security Strategy is built upon the assumption that a viable force structure will continue to man the armed forces well into the 21st century. In particular, the Reserve components have taken on an essential status within the U.S. Air Force. “Today the ‘Total Force’ requires the unique contributions of its Active and Reserve Components.”¹¹ Since our most recent action in Kosovo was primarily an air operation, the manpower dilemma of the Air Reserve Components, specifically the Air Guard is at the forefront. As stated by General Charles T. Robertson, in his November ’99 report to congress:

A decision to request PSRC is not a “business as usual” proposition. A request for PSRC is an extraordinary decision, made with full knowledge of the great sacrifices we know it will demand of our dedicated “citizen soldier” teammates and their families. From our perspective, a PSRC can be characterized as a withdrawal from our “rainy day” savings account...an action not taken often, or lightly. The actual impact of the Kosovo reserve component recall is still to be determined. It may have significant impacts on recruiting and retention.¹²

Actually, at the time of General Robertson’s testimony, the alarm bell had already sounded. On 30 September 1999, as the fiscal year came to a close, the total aggregate manpower of the United States Air National Guard forces fell short of end strength by 1276 people.¹³ This was a first. The significance of this statistic bears some explanation. The Air Guard has always been regarded as a great place to be. Historically, the Air National Guard has been an extremely attractive alternative for highly competent Air Force personnel who pursue a civilian career after a successful beginning in the Active duty Air Force. As Charles L. Cragin, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs warned, “It may well be that the increased use of the Guard and Reserves in the post Cold War world has made it harder to attract people.”¹⁴ The Army is also experiencing difficulties. Maj. Gen. Thomas J. Plewes, Chief of the Army Reserve said, “active duty soldiers, the biggest source of reserve recruits, have shown a declining propensity to join the Guard or Reserves, at least in part because of the increased deployments”.¹⁵ Air and Army National Guardsmen must be able to satisfy their desire for patriotic military service, devote attention to family, and settle in a civilian occupation as long-term members of their communities. If today’s National Guard does not offer these opportunities - due to excessive operational tempo – recruiting and retention will become an unsolvable dilemma.

On the surface, the FY 99 Air Guard shortfall may not seem too alarming. The Air Guard is over 106,000 strong and every service had serious recruiting and retention problems last year. Therefore, a shortfall of 1.2 percent hardly seems significant. However, this statistic takes on the status of “wake up

call" when the fact that the Air Guard has never missed end strength is taken into consideration. If this shortfall continues, the results will be catastrophic.

THE GUARD + RESERVES = HALF THE FORCE

The Air National Guard and USAF Reserves currently represent 64 percent of the current U.S. Air Force tactical airlift capability, 55 percent of the air refueling capability and 38 percent of the tactical air support.¹⁶ In the Army today, Guard and Reserve soldiers actually outnumber those in the regular force, 564,000 to 479,000.¹⁷ In fact, on a much larger scale, the Reserve components account for nearly half of the total manpower of the entire U.S. Military (1.37 Million Active Duty vs. 1.35 Million Guard and Reserves).¹⁸ Given these facts, specific attention must be paid to the manning needs of the Reserve components. If these manpower numbers cannot be achieved, our nation's power projection and self-defense capabilities would become seriously jeopardized. "In addition to defending the homeland, fighting and winning major theater wars (MTW) is the ultimate test of our Total Force – a test at which it must always succeed."¹⁹ If the manning of our Reserve component is not given expedient attention, the success of this "Total Force" may be in question.

REFUELERS BEAT UP DURING KOSOVO

The Guard and Reserve air refueling units were excessively tasked during Kosovo. "Operation ALLIED FORCE was a tanker intensive conflict requiring nearly an 'MTW' sized tanker aircraft and aircrew force – over 160 tanker aircraft and over 300 aircrews - to support the 78 day round the clock bombing operation."²⁰ For quite some time the Reserve Component Air Refueling units have complained that their manpower authorizations need to be increased. Currently, the tanker units are manned at a ratio of 1.27 to 1 (crews per aircraft). This represents serious shortfalls in air refueling capability. During Kosovo the tanker units were tasked at a rate requiring a minimum crew ratio of between 1.5 – 1.8. As a result missions were limited by the fact that flyable aircraft sat on the tarmac for want of enough aircrews to fly them. A chilling reality is that despite PSRC and Stop Loss implementation, these shortfalls were severe enough to indicate that two simultaneous MTWs may not have been realistically supportable during the Kosovo operation. "One lesson we learned in Kosovo ... is the fact that our current tanker crew ratio of 1.36 (1.27 for the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve) is inadequate to sustain the pace of modern high intensity air operations. Early during ALLIED FORCE, the supported CINC requested a ratio more on the order of 1.8 to 1..."²¹ In addition, air-refueling units are now experiencing negative retention effects as a direct result of high operational tempo and the PSRC during Kosovo.

IT'S THE ECONOMY? - STUPID

This end strength shortfall should not be confused with the recruiting and retention difficulty that the Active Components are currently experiencing. The robust civilian economy is the reason most often given for the military's recruiting dilemma. While this may be a factor in recruiting and retention for the

Active Duty, a slightly different theory applies when looking at those factors in the Air National Guard. Prosperous economic times should theoretically be good recruiting periods for the Guard.

The most desirable Air Guard recruit is a mid-grade officer or enlisted troop with established skills acquired while on active duty. If that recruit lands a civilian job near an Air Guard base, he or she will usually join the Guard because of patriotism and job satisfaction - not money. Therefore, pay issues have little effect on Air Guard manpower. The state of the economy can actually have an inverse effect on the recruiting of these desirable, experienced airmen in the Air National Guard. When the economy is good they feel free to pursue lucrative jobs in the civilian sector and they readily join and stay in the Air Guard to satisfy their patriotic desires for military service. When economic times are tough, the experienced airmen stay in the active duty and the Guard has more difficulty attracting these Air Force professionals. Given the positive state of our current economy, there must be some other factors that are effecting the recruiting and retention of today's Guardsman.

THE CAUSE

So what is causing this retention problem? The current pace of operations or "operational tempo" seems to be the culprit. This has manifested itself in several common threads that have appeared in exit surveys taken of 15,000 Guardsmen who have left the service within the last two years. The most significant of these were "civilian job and family concerns."²² In his report to congress Defense Secretary Cohen stated that "Conflicts between Reserve component members and their full time civilian employers account for nearly one third of all personnel losses incurred by the Reserve components."²³ In addition, the National Committee of Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve states that, "throughout the years, studies showed that nearly a third of the men and women surveyed about why they were leaving the National Guard and Reserve still indicated "employment conflict" as the source of their problems."²⁴ A recent New York Times article reiterates the same theme. "Conflicts over jobs are the leading reason reservists quit, according to Pentagon surveys, followed by separation from their families."²⁵

THE GUARDSMAN'S LIFE TRIANGLE

Each reservist plays a delicate juggling game with three opposing elements competing for the days of his/her life. These are (1) work (civilian employment), (2) family and (3) military duty (active duty and weekend drill). These form a triad that, if kept in relative balance, meets the individual needs of all three. Since the end of the Cold War, the skyrocketing operational tempo has made it nearly impossible to maintain this balance. Today, the average Air Guardsman is devoting and sustaining nearly twice as much active duty as he did a decade ago. This puts tremendous pressure on both family and job and all too often results in the Guardsman exercising that fateful option he feels is the only way out - he quits!

THE LAW

The fact that Guardsmen list civilian job pressures as one of their top reasons for leaving the Guard may, on the surface, seem unbelievable. Pragmatically speaking, that finding indicates that their

employers are breaking the law. The 1994, Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) is supposed to provide protection against those very pressures. This legislation protects Guardsmen and Reservists from job discrimination based on uniformed service. It basically requires the employer to provide prompt reinstatement, status, accrued seniority, health benefits, training/retraining and other benefits.²⁶ This, like many laws is wonderful in theory but its true effects are difficult to fully appreciate.

USERRA is a good law that is very valuable to our ability to field a reserve force in time of need. It can be very effective. "Last year, the Department of Labor investigated 1,029 complaints against employers accused of violating the law."²⁷ From the Guardsman's perspective, he is protected from blatant discrimination, but there are so many unquantifiable subtleties that Guard participation has on civilian employment, that the overall effect of the law is somewhat hollow. If a Guardsman's military service is a sore point with the employer, it is incumbent upon local military leadership to resolve the problem as amicably as possible. Otherwise, the law accomplishes the exact opposite that our military leadership intended by placing essential elements into the Reserves. Instead of fostering the support of the people for military operations, it alienates and antagonizes them. While protecting the employee, USERRA provides nothing to address the adverse effects the military service may have had on the employer. Therefore, there are subjective pressures that effect the Guardsman that may escape the purview of this law. The fact is - Guardsmen are still getting out due to job pressure despite its protection.

EMPLOYER SUPPORT OF THE GUARD AND RESERVE (ESGR)

Since civilian job conflict remains the leading reason Reservists and Guardsmen quit, major forces should be brought to bear on this problem. Very dedicated groups of people have that purpose as their ultimate objective. The National Committee of Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (NCESGR), in consort with 54 individual state ESGR organizations, has become a front line defense in combating civilian job conflicts for the Reservist and Guardsman.

The National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve was created over 25 years ago to inform employers of the ever-increasing importance of the National Guard and Reserve and to explain the necessity for - and role of - these forces in National Defense. NCESGR seeks to gain and reinforce the support of America's employers for a strong National Guard and Reserve system.²⁸

Their efforts are key in implementing programs that foster cooperation and support between the Reservist and the employer. Programs such as Bosslifts, Breakfast with the Boss, Mission One, Ombudsman programs, and Recognition of Employers are but a few of their accomplishments. We have recently increased the military manpower assigned to this effort. Approximately 30 people have been added to the staff at NCESGR headquarters in Washington, D.C. However, their resources remain very limited.

THE GENERATION X FACTOR

A study of "what makes our people tick" is valuable in analyzing what is to be done to recruit and retain them. People are truly the Guard's most precious resource and three distinct groups of potential recruits emerge as important entities to an Air Guard unit. Today, and for the next few years, they all fit into the same demographic group often labeled "Generation X." First, and most critical, are pilots. Pilot retention is a problem with a criticality all its own, but for the purposes of this paper they will simply be treated as the senior members of our demographic group. By the time pilots have garnered the requisite amount of hours to make themselves attractive to an airline, they are in their late 20's to early 30's. A constant influx of these pilots is essential to the health of any Air National Guard unit. The second group, are the highly skilled Air Force professionals that have served out their active duty obligation, perhaps on multiple tours, and have chosen a civilian career. The accession of this group of people on a regular basis is also essential to maintaining the professional expertise the Air Guard enjoys. These people are usually in their mid 20's. The third group is comprised of men and women that have never served on active duty. They join as traditional Guardsmen from day one. They are usually 18 - 22 years old. Interestingly enough, all three of these critical elements of an Air Guard organization lie in a zone of our population known as Generation X.

WHO IS GENERATION X?

"X-ers are a relatively small group of Americans, 37 million people born in a 14-year period between 1970 and 1983. What makes them a generation is, first, that they were born in a period of unusually low birth rates. From a peak, of 25.3 births per 1000 Americans in 1957, birth rates plummeted to 14.8 per 1000 in 1975 - a 41.5% decline. Rates stayed below 16.0 until 1988."²⁹

Today, it is particularly relevant that the target audience of the Air National Guard's recruiting and retention problem centers on the generation that currently contains the fewest people. Since birthrates bottomed out in 1975, today's 25 year olds form the smallest pool from which the Guard must draw its largest amount of people. The experienced pilots, maintenance and support personnel that form the backbone of the unit, are all bonafide members of Generation X. The problem is that there are many characteristics, other than small numbers, that identify Generation X.

Generation X employees often exhibit an anti-management attitude, weak loyalty to the organization or lack motivation. X-ers are more pessimistic than most Americans, less confident about their future, more prone to see a job as a stepping stone than as a career and more distrustful of management. In general, X-ers report below average job satisfaction (51% positive versus 78% for Boomers), comparatively negative attitudes toward management (47% negative versus 26% for Boomers) and a ready willingness to "job-hop" (67% expect to change jobs in three years versus 28% for Boomers.) This is particularly true of college educated X-ers whose skills are in demand. Many of these elite X-ers have benefited from the current economic prosperity. But the elite among X-ers has a profound sense that the good times may end at any time. Consequently many feel compelled to seek better jobs now - even if this means changing jobs frequently.³⁰

HOW SHOULD WE HANDLE GENERATION X TROOPS?

Understanding Generation X is only half of the battle. Military leadership must make a dedicated effort to establish an environment that caters to the specific needs of this group of young people or we are going to continue to lose them. Based on research presented to the Senior Leadership of the Air National Guard by Mr. Phil Comstock of the "Wilson Group," 11 basic recommendations and explanations were offered. While some of these can be considered applicable to any generation, they are particularly valuable when dealing with this unique segment of our population.

- Provide clear directions regarding what is expected.
- Be fair and firm.
- X-ers show stronger loyalty toward organizations that are perceived as especially competent.
- Manage tasks to promote individual competency and task-related success.
- Don't expect X-ers to "learn from their mistakes."
- Avoid references to your own youthful experiences - unless asked.
- Motivate and teach values by example.
- Give feedback quickly and specifically.
- Communicate in writing, and especially by e-mail.
- Organizations with low turnover rates among X-ers frequently recruit with a special emphasis on retention.
- Be sensitive to scheduling issues, especially with respect to X-ers family obligations.³¹

HOPE THROUGH A NEW BOOM?

Current birth rates offer some demographic hope for the future. While birth rates are not at the levels found during the Baby-Boom years of 1946 to 1964, the actual number of births is nearly at that level. The 1957 record of 4.3 million births was approached in 1990 at 4.18 million. Births again took a slight downturn, but have leveled off since 1995 at 3.9 million.³² In 1999, it is estimated that 3.9 million babies were born.

There are approximately 59 million children under the age of 15 in the US – 59 percent more than the 37 million in Generation X.³³ Those 1990 babies turn 18 in 2008. Looking forward, we can expect that the current recruiting shortage may give way to a surplus of potential young troops, possibly by the end of this decade.

THE EDUCATION FACTOR

Improving the education of our youth is essential to our country's well being. Our nation is gradually moving toward a society of "have-s and have-nots" punctuated by a clear line of demarcation known as a bachelor's degree. In 1997, among 17-24 year old civilian full time workers - 57.1 percent of college graduates were earning above the \$309/week poverty line. At the same time, only 26.3 percent of high school graduates and only 10.9 percent of high school dropouts had their financial head above water.³⁴ This is no surprise since it is widely understood that salary is usually directly proportional to the education attained. However, when examined over time these statistics take on an unsettling trend. In 1980, male college graduates earned 19 percent more than high school graduates. In 1993 that disparity

had grown to 57 percent. The trend continues to climb.³⁵ It stood at 84 percent in 1995.³⁶ In 1989, 64 percent of high school graduates were employed full time. In 1997, that number had fallen to 60 percent. During that same time span the full time employment percentage of college graduates remained essentially unchanged.³⁷ So, not only do the college graduates earn significantly more money, but their employment rates are also more stable. Perhaps our young Guardsmen would be less inclined to leave their drill status positions if the Guard offered programs that might help save them from the low side of this bifurcating trend.

TUITION ASSISTANCE

The existing educational assistance programs for our reserve component soldiers and airmen are inadequate. The Generation X troops in the National Guard are voting with their feet as their tours of duty expire. One reason may be that they want to make a better life for themselves by achieving a college degree. We need to help them achieve this if we have any hope of slowing the exodus. They are still patriotic, in their own way, but they see an economic void before them that can only be crossed by attaining that coveted "sheepskin." For many, the attainment of that goal is severely hindered by a financial hardship that could be eased, at least in part, by a viable tuition assistance program. If a program for National Guardsmen that augments the Montgomery GI Bill can be designed through cooperation between the federal government and the individual states, our nation will be well served. Such a program would reap dual benefits. If we can turn the enlisted force of the National Guard into a robust group of baccalaureate seeking individuals, we would improve the collective education level of our young population while maintaining our military's ability to achieve our national security objectives. Achieving this goal serves both the interests of the educational academic community and the military strategist alike.

Financial limitations are impeding our Generation X National Guardsmen from actively pursuing post secondary education. Gone are the days when a National Guardsman could put himself through college on his drill status paycheck. "Over the past 15 years college tuition has increased 92 percent but the median family income is only up 9 percent. In addition, student aid has not kept pace, rising only 47 percent over the same time period. Another factor contributing to the plight of our college bound youth is that student aid has transitioned to loans rather than grants."³⁸ These facts exacerbate the problem. The college dropout can actually wind up worse off than if he or she never tried college. "Those who don't complete are sometimes worse off than if they never went, especially if they took out a loan. They leave college with no degree, no skills and a debt to repay."³⁹ "Post secondary enrollments have soared during the past quarter century, yet the proportion of college students completing degrees of any kind has remained flat."⁴⁰ This means we are generating a new sub category of "have-nots" to add to an already despondent group. This is particularly troubling since the average income of college dropouts is only 2.4 percent higher than that of high school graduates.⁴¹ This problem should be addressed at the highest levels of both the Federal government and the individual states. Troops wanting to earn a college degree

should be the National Guard's target audience. Empowered by a healthy tuition assistance program the National Guard can contribute significantly toward alleviating this serious educational deficiency in today's youth. A viable tuition assistance program serves both civilian and military national objectives by improving our young people's collective education while sustaining the force at necessary manning levels.

Since the inception of the "all volunteer" force in 1973, the active duty recruiting corps has stressed the financing of post secondary education as a primary benefit of a full time military tour of duty. This is true throughout all the services. "Be All That You Can Be," "Aim High," "The Few The Proud" and "It's Not Just A Job, It's An Adventure" were all active duty recruiting slogans that held college financial aid as one of their main attractions. For the past decade, the focus of all the active services has been to offer an attainable path toward achieving a college degree. The specific benefits of these active duty programs have changed over the last few decades but their core promise remains. Each service relies on tuition assistance programs such as the Montgomery GI Bill to help finance higher education to the fiscally challenged Generation X candidates. Without these programs they will not be nearly as effective in meeting recruiting and retention goals. Today these programs offer a great financial benefit to the active duty airman, soldier, sailor, and marine in their quest toward a college degree. Unfortunately, except in a few rare cases, today's National Guardsmen do not enjoy such a lucrative tuition assistance benefit. While Guardsmen can now benefit from the Montgomery GI Bill, they are entitled to less than half of the active duty benefit.⁴² Viable State tuition assistance programs are needed which augment the current federal benefit and allow the troops to realistically pursue a college degree. Currently, 19 states offer 100 percent tuition waivers or exemptions.⁴³ Benefits can vary from - No State tuition assistance at all in California and Guam - to a full 100 percent tuition exemption in Illinois and Louisiana. The other programs that exist vary in magnitude and complexity. Some states have severely limited budgets and therefore a low number of available grants. Not surprisingly, states having robust and lucrative tuition assistance programs, like Illinois and Louisiana, enjoy robust recruiting and retention success. A Federal program enticing the states to provide such assistance would be a tremendous help. If Guardsmen are happy pursuing their goals of educational advancement they will be far more willing to participate in the high demand operational tempos we are levying upon them.

NATIONAL SERVICE

The current administration places a great deal of stock in the concept of national service. Congress established the Federal Corporation of National Service in 1993 and many federal youth service programs have sprung up over the last decade.⁴⁴ The benefits of devoting time in the service of others are not in dispute. National service benefits the individual, the community and the nation. However, service through membership in the National Guard should be given no less credit than membership in civilian service programs. Both civilian and military service can help build the character of our young people. They are both effective ways to expand learning through experience beyond the classroom, connect young people to careers and their communities, teach responsibility and basic life

skills, and provide useful service to others. Civilian national service is so highly thought of that the federal government supplies more than \$600 million dollars annually toward programs such as AmeriCorps.⁴⁵ AmeriCorps is a national service program whereby the member receives training that they utilize to provide services to communities in need. It is normally a ten-month program. The AmeriCorps member provides service to communities such as disaster relief, helping kids learn how to read, building low income housing, cleaning up streams and working to prevent crime. In 2000, it is expected that 50,000 young people will participate in AmeriCorps. The participants receive a modest living allowance, housing, meals, transportation, health care and an education award of \$4725 to be used any way they like toward the attainment of higher education.⁴⁶ In contrast, under Chapter 1606 of the Montgomery GI Bill, the National Guardsman is entitled to educational benefits of \$251/month for 36 months. In order to draw that amount, the Guardsman must serve for 6 years, and be enrolled as a full time college student.⁴⁷ The programs are so totally different, they cannot easily be compared. Both attempt to reward the participant with financial incentives to achieve higher education. For the AmeriCorps participant, 10 months of all expenses paid domestic community service, nets him \$4725. For the Guardsman, 6 years of military service (which will most probably include multiple tours of duty overseas in less than desirable areas of the world), nets him \$251/month for 3 years provided he goes to school full time. Given the nature of the jobs and the current National Guard operational tempos, the Guardsman's benefit falls significantly short.

ROTC

While not specifically applicable to the National Guard, it is interesting to note that ROTC scholarships are not as prevalent as one would expect. There is no better way to harness the talent needed in our future military leadership than through aggressive Military Academy and ROTC programs. However, for academic year 1999-2000 (Air Force ROTC only) there were only 205 Type I (4-yr./full ride) scholarships awarded nation wide. There were 476 Type II (4-yr./\$15K limit/year) and 471 targeted (4 yr./\$9K limit to specific colleges).⁴⁸ This, coupled with the 1200 cadets that enter the Air Force Academy each year, does not seem sufficient to fill the Air Force future leadership needs.

CONCLUSIONS

The United States military has significantly increased its reliance on its Reserve components. Consequently, manpower shortfalls in the Guard and Reserves should be considered to have the same degree of severity as those of the Active duty forces. At the same time, the Reserve component shortfalls are unique and should be treated as such. Our Reserve forces are being deployed at a tremendously accelerated operational tempo, which is a significant factor in Reserve forces retention. The major effort in Kosovo may have triggered an exodus, which has manifested itself in the Air Guard missing end strength for FY 99. Operational tempo is the disease, all the rest are merely treatments of symptoms. If we refuse to treat the disease, we will be doing nothing but putting "Band-Aids" on the symptoms while the disease rages on. The following is a summary of conclusions:

- Two main reasons for retention deficiencies are family and employer stress.
- The lessening of operational tempo would significantly relieve the negative effects of family and employer stress.
- The manning in our Reserve component tanker units is insufficient.
- Serious attention should be paid to ESGR efforts.
- It is important for leadership to understand the complexities involved in recruiting retaining Generation X.
- The demographics indicate that the young workforce will not significantly expand until later in the decade.
- Too few of the States (19) have 100 percent tuition assistance programs for Guardsmen.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Serious attention should be paid to the Reserve components' recruiting and retention dilemma as a separate entity. The current steps being taken to solve the Active Duty manpower problems may not address the specific needs of the Reserves. The long-term, second order effects must never be ignored when committing our Reserve component forces overseas. The NCA must carefully weigh the "total force" implications of United States involvement and consider the effects each commitment will have on the Reserve components, as well as the Active Duty. As stated in PDD-25, our senior leadership must – "Make disciplined and coherent choices about which peace operations to support and reduce U.S. costs for UN peace operations."⁴⁹ Hopefully the "costs" of these operations will not turn out to be our Reserve component manpower. Specific recommendations are:

1. One policy that can alleviate some of the operational tempo burden from the Air Guard and Reserves is to coordinate Operational Readiness Inspections (ORI's) with actual deployments. Where better to evaluate a unit than while it is conducting "real world missions"? This alleviates the "double whammy" of returning from a deployment and flowing immediately into a major inspection.
2. The manning ratio in our Guard and Reserve tanker units should be increased.
3. We should look seriously at legislating incentives for employers of Guardsmen that make it financially lucrative to have weekend warriors in their businesses. This could include tax incentives, favorable credit for government contract awards and work sharing programs whereby the military trains the Guardsman in a skill – (engine mechanic, for example) - that is beneficial to both the military and the civilian employer.
4. Leadership should develop a better understanding of Generation X in order provide them the incentives they need to remain in the Guard and Reserves.
5. A cooperative effort should be undertaken between federal and state government entities to aid each state in implementing a viable tuition assistance program for Guardsmen and Reservists.

It must be remembered that there is a price tag associated with each deployment in support of peace operations – the possible depletion of our essential Reserve component force structure. If we overextend the men and women of our Guard and Reserve forces today, we must be willing to accept the grim fact that they might not be there tomorrow.

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ENDNOTES

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² Lewis Sorley, "Creighton Abrams and Active-Reserve Integration in Wartime," Parameters, Vol 21, No. 2, (Summer 1991): 37.

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⁴ Steven Lee Myers, "Reservists New Role Transforms Military," New York Times, 24 January 2000, sec. 1A, p. 1.

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⁶ Ibid., 2.

⁷ John M. Shalikashvili, National Military Strategy, (Washington, D.C.: The Pentagon, 1997), cover.

⁸ Myers, 2.

⁹ William J. Clinton, A National Security Strategy for a New Century (Washington, D.C.: The White House, October 1998), 14.

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¹¹ Shalikashvili, 22.

¹² Charles T. Robertson, "CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY, Submitted Written Statement to the House Armed Services Readiness Subcommittee," 26 OCT 99; available from <<http://ustcweb.safb.af.mil/speeches/991108-3.html>>; Internet; accessed 5 March 2000.

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¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Cragin, 8.

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¹⁹ Clinton, 22.

²⁰ Robertson, 2.

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²² Brian Redmond, NGB retention office, telephone interview by author, 6 October 1999.

²³ Secretary of Defense William Cohen, "A Report to Congress Concerning Incentives to Employers of members of the Reserve Components." Washington, D.C., 19 April 1997.,4.

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²⁸ NCESGR Website, Accessed, 22 February 2000.

²⁹ Phillip Comstock, "Understanding and Retaining Generation X." Briefing slides with scripted commentary. Air National Guard "Safety Focus '99", Pittsburgh, Pa, 23 March 1999.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

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³⁵ Daniel Yankelovich, "Public Opinion and the Youth of America," in The Forgotten Half Revisited, ed. Samuel Halperin, (Washington, D.C.: American Youth Policy Forum, 1998), 31.

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³⁷ Halperin, 7.

³⁸ Lawrence E. Gladieux and Watson Scott Swail, "Postsecondary Education: Student Success Not Just Access," in The Forgotten Half Revisited, ed. Samuel Halperin, (Washington, D.C.: American Youth Policy Forum, 1998), 106 - 107.

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⁴⁰ Ibid., 104.

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